THE

WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

For MONDAY, December 26, 1808.

THOUGHTS ON THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

THE close of each revolving year is an awful period to a reflecting mind; to every age and every rank it presents a subject of serious meditation. The young and giddy, just entering on the busy stage of the world, look forward to the commencement of a new year with all the proud exultation of hope and expected pleasure; but, alas! they behold not in the gaudy perspective before them, a thousand disgusting objects, which, on a nearer approach, may fill them with dismay and horror. Love and friendship stretch forward their inviting arms to welcome them, but perfidy and disappointment lurk behind, to plant daggers in the bosom of unsuspecting innocence. Surrounded by parents and kindred, most tenderly beloved, they conclude the present year in mirth and festivity, while the next may leave them desolate and forlorn. The advantages of fortune too are equally precarious; those who enjoy competence and ease, may, in the rapid course of twelve short months, find themselves surrounded with difficulties, and overwhelmed with calamity. The admiring circle, now drawn round them by hospitality and gay spirits, will shun the abode of indigence; beauty may become the spoil of villainy, and talent be obscured beneath the dark cloud of penury. Then may some exclaim, in bitterness of heart, "What claim have I on the compassion of others? In the spring of my life I lived but for myself; I neglected the cry of misery; I administered only to the palate of luxury, and triumphed only in the proud extravagance of dress; how then do I complain of being disregarded, who have so seldom attended to the wants of others?"

Nor let the aged think themselves secure from the hopeless pangs of remorse. Though the security of independance may seem to place them beyond the reach of such vicissitudes, there are other fears to appal their minds. The present year may terminate all their prospects of temporal felicity, may call them into a new existence, and perhaps bring them to an awful account of their past conduct. How necessary then must be a serious self-examination at this momentous crisis! Few there are, who can look back and say, "by so much have I amended my life since this day twelvemonths." Far different are the expressions we hear at the close of every year—"I will provide such and such dresses for the winter and spring; I will have my habitation repaired and beautified; I will order in my wine and spirits; I will bring my children from school, and take them to both the playhouses."

Thus all is expectation and preparation. But we hear not—"I will begin the new year with a steady determination of abjuring my former follies; I will see that my family punctually attend divine service; I will discharge all my profligate servants; I will relinquish the society of my dissolute companions; I will look out my cast wardrobe, and distribute it among the neighbouring poor; I will set aside half the sum usually expended in wine, to purchase coals for the poor wretches who are shivering at my doors." These would be resolutions worthy of a Christian, and which might be made with far less inconvenience than many will allow themselves to imagine. Then might we hope that the coming spring would fill our bosoms with gladness; the summer crown our sanguine wishes with a plenteous harvest, and its choicest fruits; and the succeeding winter find us blest with every social comfort. Year after year would thus roll on in the sweet consciousness of a well spent life. The unavoidable evils of this mortal state might assail us, but reflection would calmly repose on the bosom of resignation, and the emanations of hope cheer the gloomy path of this earthly pilgrimage.

Let me then exhort you, my young friends, to call your wandering thoughts back from the alluring point to which they were directed; build not on promised pleasures, which flatter but to decoy; which, like the illusive meteor of a marshy soil, leads your erring footsteps into a track you never can retrace, and then treacherously leaves you, bewildered and unprotected in the miry waste. Follow no guide but religion; own no friend but virtue; admit no guest but an approving conscience. Then will your home be a palace; your table the seat of conviviality; and your pillow the soft soother of every transient grief. Each season will in turn administer its pleasures, and each closing year add but a

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page of commendation to a volume of entertainment and instruction.

T. O.

Customs at Lisbon respecting Courtship and Marriage.

THE men and the women seem in Portugal to form two different nations. The men are diminutive, ill made, squat, swarthy, without dignity in their gait, without grace in their air; the women are well-formed, well-proportioned, well-grown; fair complexioned, animated, full of grace and attractions; they have beautiful eyes, fine skins, slender shapes, elegant insinuating manners; in short, they combine every thing that can please and attract.

They are at the same time gentle, amiable, affectionate; they know how to render themselves interesting; they have natural good understandings, which, if cultivated, would unfold themselves very agreeably; but their education is altogether neglected; they see no company; they are left entirely to themselves, and it is to nature alone that they are indebted for those amiable, affable manners, and other agreeable qualities, by which they are so greatly distinguished.

Love renders them ingenious and contriving; their inventive wit, fertile in resources, never fails them in time of need. Early exercised in the art of feigning, they excel in it; their countenance is never disconcerted; dissimulation disguises itself in their features under the mask of innocent candour; an ill-timed blush never betrays their thoughts, never disturbs their pleasures; they appear to have truth upon their lips, but it rarely resides in their minds.

They are real Proteuses; they assume whatever form they please, whatever accords with their secret interests; however, they are good, obliging, affectionate, generous, interesting friends, and sufficiently kind-hearted to consider it incumbent upon them to contribute to the happiness of many.

Lisbon has many convents for nuns; it is not, however, usual to place young ladies in them as boarders, but they remain with their friends 'till they get married.

They do not, however, on that account enjoy the more liberty; for they are never suffered to go out alone, but are kept continually under the eye of their mothers. Some of them never go out at all, not even on Sundays to church, but hear mass in the oratory of their house. All intercourse with young persons of the other sex is interdicted them; these are never admitted upon a familiar footing in any family in which there are unmarried young ladies.

This practice seems calculated to keep the young ladies out of the reach of seduction; but they find a thousand means of eluding the precautions which are taken to guard them.

External constraint, want of employment, a warm and always premature constitution develope in the man inventive genius; there is no stratagem which they do not contrive, no expedient which they do not put in practice, always upon friendly terms with the female domestics to whom the care of them is usually intrusted, they seduce them or suffer themselves to be seduced by these mercenary and faithless keepers.

If their mother absents herself for a moment, they immediately avail themselves of her absence. The mother sleeps after dinner; she sleeps at night; these are precious opportunities, which the young ladies do not fail to employ to the best advantage, with the ever-ready aid of their officious maids.

They cannot communicate with their lovers by letters; most of them cannot write; but they possess a language which is very familiar to them, which the Portuguese understand with ease, but which is unintelligible to strangers. They converse in open day with their lovers from the window to the street; they speak without uttering a syllable; signs are sufficient for their purpose, and these signs are made with their fingers; thus they carry on long conversations, and express every thing they wish to express. These mute conversations are sometimes very animated; they move their fingers in every possible direction with a rapidity difficult to be conceived.

All the young ladies wish to be married; they see in the nuptial state an appearance of liberty, an exemption from the constraint to which they are subjected. Accordingly they do not easily let slip an opportunity to get a husband whenever it presents itself; be he old or young, handsome or ugly, amiable or disgusting, a foreigner or one of their own nation, a catholic or a protestant, still he is a husband, and that is sufficient for them; they therefore take him without further deliberation. Their desire for marriage is so powerful, that they do not hesitate to give up their clandestine lovers for the first comer who makes serious proposals, though generally with a a mental reserve that they will indemnify themselves when they are able.

Hence it is very easy for a gentleman to find a wife; he is almost certain of not meeting with a refusal. Hence, however, many unhappy marriages, in which disgust follows close upon the nuptial ceremony; in which the husband, almost always a victim to the tricks, the caprices, and carelessness of his wife, curses a thousand times the union which he formed with too great facility.

Unlucky is he who has had the indiscretion to make a promise of marriage, whether verbal or in writing, to a young woman, whether in a high or a low sphere of life; for he is soon compelled

compelled to marry her. Every thing unites against him, the relations of the young woman, the priests, the monks, the laws of the country, the tribunals of justice; and it requires a very powerful protection to evade the dilemma. The court sometimes interferes with an order commanding the rash promiser to complete an union destined to render the rest of his life miserable. He must obey; the order is issued by a minister in the name of the queen, who knows nothing of the matter; but it is not on that account the less imperative.

The abuse was formerly carried to an incredible height. Promises were frequently pretended to have been made, and the performance of them was demanded, without any other proof than the declaration of the woman, whatever her age might be; it was sufficient if the man had visited her. The present queen, however, limited the operation of the law to those whose extreme youth seems to render them most liable to seduction, fixing the age of eighteen, beyond which a suit cannot be preferred on behalf of a woman to compel a man to marry her on the above-mentioned plea.

This is a wise law; nevertheless it is evaded every day, so that it becomes almost useless. The courts of judicature adhere strictly to it, and nonsuit an action brought by a woman who has passed the age specified by law; but, will it be credited? the law becomes useless, its operation is frustrated.

Whatever may be the age of the young woman who pretends to have been seduced, whatever manœuvres and contrivances she herself may on the contrary have used in order to seduce, there are always abundance of monks ready to take her cause in hand. And what is not this cowled race capable of doing in Portugal?

The monks cry out against the scandal, declaim on the necessity of supporting good morals, making reparation to violated honour, vindicating seduced innocence, which sometimes is an innocence of twenty-five years well tutored and abundantly experienced; they raise the other monks, the confessors, and the nuns; these united procure the interest of some of the nobles and the ladies of the court, they gain some of the secretaries over to their party; and at length obtain from ministerial despotism an irrevocable order for the marriage. This order must be obeyed, though contrary to the tenor of the law of the state, under pain of incurring the indignation and vengeance of the minister who has issued it in the name of a queen who has heard not a word concerning the matter.

The formalities which the church requires to be observed in Lisbon, with respect to marriages appear very repulsive to strangers, and they oppose great obstacles to their becoming married.

Impediments

Impediments without number are laid in their way relative to their country, their birth, their age, their state of celibacy or widowhood, their having been previously married or not, their being catholics or protestants, &c. &c.

Upon all these points they are so much harassed, and kept so long in suspence, that many renounce the idea of marrying, but those better acquainted with the usages of the country know how they may speedily remove every difficulty. With the interest of the great, or by money conveyed privately into the hands of a secretary, a commissioner, or a registrer of the ecclesiastical court, they immediately obtain permission to prove by witnesses every thing they wish. Two witnesses are sufficient, and these are easily procured.

These witnesses, without having ever seen or known any thing of the man who is about to marry, affirm upon their oath, that he was born on such a day, in such a year, at such a town in France, Spain, Italy, Germany; that such a one is his father; that he never was married either in his own country, or in Portugal, or any where else; that he is a true member of the apostolic Roman catholic church, &c. &c. and after this slight formality has been gone through, the banns are published, permission to marry is obtained, and the nuptial knot is tied within a few days.

All these difficulties, however, disappear at the imperious voice of a monk; they also disappear in those forced marriages which are entered into contrary to the inclination of the bridegroom, and to which he submits merely in order to escape the tyranny of the ministers and the vengeance of the monks. In these cases the marriage is performed without delay, without ceremonies or formalities, without any enquiry respecting the birth or religion of the intended husband, without examining whether he is of the age authorized by the law, without ascertaining whether he is a bachelor, widower, or has actually a wife living: it is necessary he should marry now, whatever he may be, and all remonstrances are vain.

The nuptial ceremonies may be performed in Lisbon in the most accommodating manner possible; they may be performed at any hour of the day or night, in a church or at a private house. If you prefer the latter, you send for the priest to come to your house, and he marries you at the bedside, so that a single step takes you from the feet of the pastor into the nuptial bed. Money does every thing in this matter; this metal removes all difficulties.

Many marriages take place at Lisbon between protestants and catholics; but they cannot be solemnized without having previously obtained a dispensation from the pope; it is also necessary that the intended bride be the person of the two that is of the catholic religion, for a catholic man is not permitted

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to marry a protestant woman. The cause of this distinction lies in the influence which the wife is supposed to have over her husband, whereby it is hoped that she will gradually gain him over to embrace her religion. The children by such marriages are brought up in two different religions; the boys in that of the father, and the girls in that of the mother.

A singular ceremony is observed in the solemnization of marriages between catholics and protestants. The protestant is not suffered to enter the church; but the marriage ceremony is performed at the door, the bride kneeling within the church, while the bridegroom remains without. The priest, however, takes the protestant money as readily as catholic; he refuses the heretic admission into the church, but he does not refuse the heretic's money admission into his pocket.

THE VILLAGE CURATE;

Or, As you Like it.

A TALE.

BY MR. BACON.

The good, for virtue's sake, abhor to sin.
CREECH.

AT an age when the human mind is most susceptible of, and too often imbibes, a passion for voluptuous pleasure; ere yet experience her sage precepts had impressed, Lord Belfont inherited a splendid fortune. His levees were crouded with the most fashionable part of the world: the voice of flattery incessantly sung his praise, and bestowed on him every virtue that could ennoble man. His rank in life, and extensive fortune, introduced him into the first families in England; and overtures of marriage were made to him by the parents and guardians of the greatest beauties of the age; but Belfont, though not insensible to the charms of beauty, was not yet become the vassal of their power.

The attention which he invariably received from the whole circle of his acquaintance, it might reasonably be supposed, was very acceptable to the inexperienced Belfont; but, notwithstanding his extreme youth, and ignorance of men and manners, he suspected the sincerity of those encomiums which flattery bestowed on him; and the pliant voice of adulation had made little impression on his mind.

At once to prove the integrity of his professed friends, he carefully spread a report that, by one imprudent step, he had precipitated from prosperity's flowery mount, into the barren

vale of poverty. Swift as wild fire ran the evil tale; and those very doors which, as it were by magic, opened at the approach of the rich and happy Belfont, were now barred against the ruined spendthrift.

To give his distress an air of certainty, he made several applications for assistance to his once vowed eternal friends, which were invariably treated with a mortifying contempt. To the fair rivals of his affections he addressed his tale of sorrow: here, too, neglect was his fate. Belfont, dispossessed of the means to gratify their fondness for dress, amusement, and pleasure, was an object no longer worthy of their regard.

Reflecting on these events, he exclaimed "How wretched are the children of fortune! The poor man in his hour of distress, finds a friend; but the rich, when he ceases to be so, is disregarded by those whom his former bounty fed; and who have not charity enough to give to his misfortunes even the costless sigh of pity!"

In the midst of his contemplations, a servant entered the room, and announced the arrival of Lord Bremere; who, returning from a country excursion, had just heard of his friend's misfortune, and hasted to relieve his necessities. As he approached, Belfont, rising from his chair, ran to meet him. "It is some consolation," said he, "for the disappointments I have experienced, to find the man whom I most valued not unworthy the esteem I bore him. This," continued he, "more than recompenses the ingratitude of those mercenary wretches, who cannot recollect the features of their friend when shaded by the veil of affected distress."

The conclusion of Belfont's address forcibly struck Lord Bremere, who repeated the words "*affected distress!*" Adding, with much surprise "Are, then, your misfortunes bred of the idle tattle of the town?"

"No, my lord," returned Belfont. "Not from those contemptible beings, who eagerly busy themselves with every body's affairs, while they neglect their own, and who are only industrious in the propagation of scandal; but from myself arose the tale of my distress. I invented it, merely to prove the sincerity of those protestations of eternal friendship, which every day the syren, flattery, whispered in my ear; and which, to speak the truth, were become most intolerably disgusting. Among my female friends," he continued, "a lady on whom I looked with partial eyes, and who, in fact, had made some faint impression on my heart, had the cruelty to smile at my distress: but I thank her for her contempt; it has broke asunder those chains her beauty had forged to hold my heart in bondage."

"And what does your lordship mean to make of this discovery?" enquired Bremere.

" My resolutions, Charles," returned Belfont, " and your ideas, I will venture to say, are of an opposite nature. You, perhaps, imagine, that I shall return to the fashionable world, refute the opinion it entertains of my distress, and reproach it for its ingratitude!"

" What else can you possibly propose?" asked Bremere.

" Convinced of your lordship's integrity," replied Belfont, " I shall not hesitate to repose in your breast the secret of my resolves. The sudden death of my uncle," continued he, " has given me an ample fortune; the enjoyment of which, in the vulgar opinion of mankind, ensures the constant possession of happiness. Alas! how mistaken such a notion! It is true, my every wish is gratified but one. You smile, Charles! and already anticipate that yet unaccomplished wish—Yes! my friend, the society of a virtuous female, whose bosom is awake to the soft touches of humanity, and who will not, to the offspring of distress, refuse the tributary sigh of pity, nor from the needy sufferer withhold the sacred boon of charity, is what I am now in search of. In the higher circles of life," added he, " my pursuit has proved abortive; and, assuming the appearance of the rustic cottager, I mean to seek it in humbler scenes!"

It was in vain, that Lord Bremere endeavoured to dissuade his friend from his purpose. Belfont remained inflexible to all his entreaties; and, having drawn from his friend an assurance of inviolable secrecy, they parted: Bremere, to the haunts of giddy fashion; Belfont, to prepare for his visit to those of rural felicity.

After a short repast, Belfont, leaving directions with his steward for the management of the family in his absence, retired to rest; and, at an early hour, while the sons of riot and dissipation were returning from their nocturnal revels, he left his splendid mansion, and in the humble garb of a peasant, with a few necessaries tied up in a handkerchief, began his retreat from the metropolis. His name and title were only known in Grosvenor-square: at present, he contented himself with the less dignified appellation of George Trueman; and all traces of Lord Belfont were for a time vanished.

Having continued his walk for near three hours, he found himself somewhat fatigued; when an inn, opportunely presenting itself to view, afforded him an opportunity of resting his weary limbs, and satisfying the cravings of nature, which exercise had rendered more than commonly acute. The obsequious host soon furnished him with an excellent breakfast; which having finished, he mounted the Norwich stage, that had arrived during his repast, and at the close of day found himself in that city.

Meanwhile, Bremere, mixing with the circle of Belfont's late acquaintance, heard with silent indignation the illiberal and unjust reflections that were cast on the supposed misconduct of his friend.

The impertinent enquiries, with which his ears were assailed, from all who knew him in the habits of friendship with Belfont, were almost too much for his temper to bear with composure; and he was often on the point of violating the promise of secrecy his friend had extorted from him, to vindicate his character from the aspersions of slander.

Seated, one evening, in a box at Drury Lane Theatre, he was seen by Lady Caroline Blandish, from the opposite side of the house; who, *sans ceremonie*, immediately came round to him. "So, my lord!" said she, entering the box; "what is become of your friend Belfont? Have you seen him lately? How does he bear his misfortunes? I am really sorry for the unfortunate youth!"

"My friend," replied Bremere, "is infinitely obliged to your ladyship for the concern you take in his distress!"

"Why, you know, my lord," returned Lady Caroline, "one can't help being concerned for the distresses of those who were of one's acquaintance. I profess," continued she, "the news of his ruin astonished me prodigiously; and, I assure you, I felt myself extremely hurt at it; for his lordship had paid me much attention, and I began to think I had made a conquest. It is, however," added she, "very fortunate that the affair ended as it did; for, you know, it would have been a shocking thing to have involved one's self in such difficulties."

"True, madam!" replied Bremere; who, by her ladyship's discourse, found she was the person to whom Belfont alluded as having attracted his particular notice; "but, after all, whatever diminution the fortune of Lord Belfont has received, be assured, it is still sufficient to support the woman whom he shall honour with his hand, in a stile of elegance that might soothe the most extensive vanity!" And, without waiting her ladyship's reply, bowed, and wished her good-night; disgusted with the affected concern she expressed for his friend's imaginary distress, which was but ill calculated to conceal the spirit of malevolence that rankled in her bosom.

Lady Caroline stood some minutes after Bremere's departure, in a fixed astonishment: she knew not what construction to put upon his words; but, after a short consideration, she concluded what he had said, was only to shelter his friend from the censure of the world, and to enforce the opinion that his affairs were not so desperate as they had been represented. With these ideas, she rejoined her company; and, in discours-

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ing on other topics, Belfont and his misfortunes escaped her memory.

(To be continued.)

Description of the ancient Festival of May-day.

[From STRUTT's Queenhoo-Hall, a Romance.

IN the front of the pavillion, a large square was staked out, and fenced with ropes, to prevent the crowd from pressing upon the performers, and interrupting the diversion; there were also two bars at the bottom of the inclosure, through which the actors might pass and repass, as occasion required.

Six young men first entered the square, clothed in jerkins of leather, with axes upon their shoulders like woodmen, and their heads bound with large garlands of ivy-leaves intertwined with sprigs of hawthorn. Then followed

Six young maidens of the village, dressed in blue kirtles, with garlands of primroses on their heads, leading a fine sleek cow, decorated with ribbons of various colours interspersed with flowers; and the horns of the animal were tipped with gold. These were succeeded by

Six foresters, equipped in green tunics, with hoods and hosen of the same colour; each of them carried a bugle-horn attached to a baldrick of silk; which he sounded as he passed the barrier. After them, came

Peter Lanaret, the baron's chief falconer, who personified Robin Hood: he was attired in a bright grass-green tunic, fringed with gold; his hood and his hosen were parti-coloured, blue and white; he had a large garland of rose-buds on his head, a bow bent in his hand, a sheaf of arrows at his girdle, and a bugle-horn depending from a baldrick of light blue tarantine, embroidered with silver; he had also a sword and a dagger, the hilts of both being richly embossed with gold.

Fabian a page, as Little John, walked at his right hand; and Cecil Cellerman the butler, as Will Stukeley, at his left. These, with ten others of the jolly outlaw's attendants who followed, were habited in green garments, bearing their bows bent in their hands, and their arrows in their girdles. Then came

Two maidens, in orange-coloured kirtles with white courtpies, strewing flowers; followed immediately by

The maid Marian, elegantly habited in a watchet-coloured tunic reaching to the ground; over which she wore a white linen rochet with loose sleeves, fringed with silver, and very neatly plaited; her girdle was of silver baudekin, fastened with a double bow on the left side; her long flaxen hair was divided into many ringlets, and flowed upon her shoulders; the

top part of her head was covered with a net-work cawl of gold, upon which was placed a garland of silver, ornamented with blue violets. She was supported by

Two bride-maidens, in sky-coloured rochets girt with crimson girdles, wearing garlands upon their heads, of blue and white violets. After them, came

Four other females in green courtpies, and garlands of violets and cowslips: Then

Sampson the smith, as Friar Tuck, carrying a huge quarter-staff on his shoulder; and Morris the moletaker, who represented Much the miller's son, having a long pole with an inflated bladder attached to one end: And after them

The May-pole, drawn by eight fine oxen, decorated with scarfs, ribbons, and flowers of divers colours; and the tips of their horns were embellished with gold. The rear was closed by the hobby horse and the dragon.

When the May-pole was drawn into the square, the foresters sounded their horns, and the populace expressed their pleasure by shouting incessantly until it reached the place assigned for its elevation: and during the time the ground was preparing for its reception, the barriers of the bottom of the inclosure were opened for the villagers to approach, and adorn it with ribbons, garlands, and flowers, as their inclination prompted them.

The pole being sufficiently onerated with finery, the square was cleared from such as had no part to perform in the pageant; and then it was elevated amidst the reiterated acclamations of the spectators. The woodmen and the milk-maidens danced around it according to the rustic fashion; the measure was played by Peretto Cheverette, the baron's chief minstrel, on the bag-pipes, accompanied with the pipe and tabour, performed by one of his associates. When the dance was finished, Gregory the jester, who, as we have observed already, undertook to play the hobby-horse, came forward with his appropriate equipment, and, frisking up and down the square without restriction, imitated the galloping, curvetting, ambling, trotting, and other paces of a horse, to the infinite satisfaction of the lower classes of the spectators. He was followed by Peter Parker, the baron's ranger, who personated a dragon, hissing, yelling, and shaking his wings with wonderful ingenuity; and to complete the mirth, Morris, in the character of Much, having small bells attached to his knees and elbows, capered here and there between the two monsters in the form of a dance; and as often as he came near to the sides of the inclosure, he cast slily a handful of meal into the faces of the gaping rustics, or rapped them about their heads with the bladder tied at the end of his pole. In the mean time, Sampson representing Friar Tuck, walked with much gravity

vity around the square, and occasionally let fall his heavy staff upon the toes of such of the crowd as he thought were approaching more forward than they ought to do; and if the sufferers cried out from the sense of the pain, he addressed them in a solemn tone of voice, advising them to count their beads, say a paternoster or two, and to beware of purgatory. These vagaries were highly palatable to the populace, who announced their delight by repeated plaudits and loud bursts of laughter; for this reason they were continued for a considerable length of time: but Gregory, beginning at last to faulter in his paces, ordered the dragon to fall back: the well-nurtured beast, being out of breath, readily obeyed, and their two companions followed their example; which concluded this part of the pastime.

Then Thomas the reve's son, in the habit of a pilgrim, came to the front of the pavillion, where he was met by a party of the young men and maidens belonging to the procession; and the following dialogue, composed for the purpose by Peretto the minstrel, was sung; and he accompanied the voices with his harp:

PALMER. *To the Women.*

Fair damsels, says what brings you here?

DAMSELS.

To celebrate the first of May.

PALMER.

Wherefore this day to you so dear?

DAMSELS.

It is bold Robin's wedding-day.

CHORUS.

With sprightly dance and carols gay,
We welcome Robin's wedding-day.

PALMER. *To the Men.*

Why stand the bowmen on a row?

MEN.

Prepar'd to play a skilful game.

PALMER.

Some saint to honour 'tis I trow;

MEN.

MEN.

'Tis Robin Hood, for that's his name.

CHORUS.

With sprightly dance, and carols gay,
We keep bold Robin's wedding-day.

PALMER.

But who is she so fair, bedight
In tunic blue and rochet white?

WOMAN.

Dost thou not know her, holy man?
It is the blythe maid Marian.

PALMER.

How name ye him y'clad in green,
With party hose and fringes sheen?

MAN.

It is the prince of archers good:
And he is hight bold Robin Hood.

CHORUS.

With merry carrol, dance, and play,
We welcome Robin's wedding-day.

PALMER.

I am a stranger, well ye wot,
And much I have travell'd: I have seen
The Lord's sepulchre, and the grot
Where he was born of maiden clean.

The shells of Cales, in sign of grace,
Adorn my hat: and you may spy
A vernicle, with his dear face
Impress'd, who died on Calvary.

Upon my cloak Saint Peter's keys
Were drawn at Rome, with crosses wide:
And reliques from beyond the seas
I bear, or woe may me betide!

The snow topp'd hills of Armony,
Where Noe's ark may now be found,
I've seen; in sooth I do not lie;
Told o'er my beads, and kiss'd the ground.

At

At Walsingham my vows I've paid;
At Waltham eke and Coloraine;
And to Saint Thomas I have pray'd,
Who near the holy rood was slain.

But tell me to what saint, I pray,
What martyr, or what angel bright,
Is dedicate this holy day,
That brings you here so daily dight?

This calendar I've search'd with care
For saints y'bless'd and angels good;
The holy saints are named there,
But no such saint as Robin Hood.

MEN.

Dost thou not, simple palmer, know—
What ev'ry child can tell thee here,
Nor saint nor angel claims this show,
But the bright season of the year?

WOMEN.

The cowslips now adorn the dells;
On sunny banks primroses blow,
With violets sweet and dainty bells;
And on the green the daisies grow.

The birds in warbling chorus sing
In hedge and grove and shady wood,
Inviting us to hail the spring,
And join the troop of Robin Hood.

CHORUS.

With merry carrol, dance, and play,
We welcome Robin's wedding day.

When the dialogue was concluded, the archers set up a target at the lower part of the green, and made trial of their skill in a regular succession. Robin Hood and Will. Stukeley excelled their comrades; and both of them lodged an arrow in the centre circle of gold, so near to each other that the difference could not readily be decided, which occasioned them to shoot again, when Robin struck the gold a second time, and Stukeley's arrow was affixed upon the edge of it. Robin was therefore adjudged the conqueror; and the prize of honour, a garland of laurel embellished with variegated ribbons, was put upon his head; and to Stukeley was given a garland of ivy, because he was the second best performer in that contest.

The pageant was finished with the archery; and the procession began to move away, to make room for the villagers, who afterwards assembled in the square, and amused themselves by dancing round the May-pole in promiscuous companies, according to the ancient custom.

MUSCOVIAN FUNERALS.

IN Muscovy, when a man dies, his friends and relations immediately assemble, and seat themselves in a circle round the corpse, of which they ask the following questions; "Why have you died? Is it because your commercial concerns went badly? Or was it because you could not obtain the accomplishment of your desires? Was your wife deficient in youth or beauty? Or has she been faithless to your bed?" They then rise and quit the house.

When they carry the body to be buried, it is covered and conveyed on a bier to the brink of the intended grave, the covering is then withdrawn, the priest reads some prayers, the company kiss the dead, and retire. These ceremonies finished, the priest places between the fingers of the dead man a piece of paper signed by the patriarch confessor, purporting his having been a good Christian. This they suppose serves for a passport to the other world, and from its certifying the goodness of the deceased, St. Peter, when he sees it, will open to him the gates of eternal life. The letter given, the corpse is removed, and placed in the grave, with the face towards the east.

T R U T H.

THOUGH it may not always be safe, or advantageous, to speak truth, it is always possible to avoid a direct lie. Prevarication is, indeed, scarcely less culpable, but there are situations wherein it might be justified. A lion, having a complaint in his stomach, called to a sheep who came past, and asked him if his breath was tainted by the disorder. The poor animal, incapable of deceit, answered "Aye;" upon which the lion in a rage bit off his head. A wolf next was asked the same question, and, like a true courtier, replied, "No, sire!" "I will kill thee," said the tyrant, "for a liar and a flatterer." The fox just then came into the royal presence, and a similar inquiry was made of this dexterous politician: "Indeed, sire," said he, "I must humbly intreat your majesty to excuse me; for being troubled with a terrible cold, my scent is imperfect."

An ANECDOTE.

UPON removing some books at the chambers of the late Sir William Jones, a large spider dropped upon the floor, on which Sir William, with some warmth, said to his friend, Thomas Day, Esq. who happened to be present, "Kill that spider, Day, kill that spider!" "No," said Mr. Day, with that coolness for which he was so very conspicuous, "I will not kill that spider, Jones. I do not know that I have any right to kill that spider. Besides, suppose when you are going in your coach to Westminster Hall, a superior being who, perhaps, may have as much power over you as you have over this insect, should say to his companion, 'Kill that lawyer, kill that lawyer!' how would you like that, Jones? and I am sure a lawyer is a much more noxious animal than a spider."

LONGEVITY OF THE TORTOISE.

IN the library at Lambeth Palace is the shell of a land tortoise, brought to that palace by Archbishop Laud, about the year 1633, which lived to the year 1753, when it was killed by the great inclemency of the weather; a labourer in the garden having, for a trifling wager, dug it up from its winter retreat, and neglecting to replace it, the cold, it is supposed, caused its death soon after.

Another tortoise was placed in the episcopal house at Fulham, by the same archbishop, when he resided there, anno 1628; this died a natural death, anno 1753.

What were the ages of these tortoises at the time they were placed at Lambeth and Fulham, is not known.

Answer, by J. Gannis, an Axminster School Boy, to W. J.'s Question, inserted July 11.

BY Hutton's mensuration the weight of a shell is equal to 9-64ths of the difference of the cube of the external and internal diameters, therefore 12×12×12—9×9×9-64ths =171 lbs. for the weight of the shell.

The same author further adds that the cube of the inner diameter in inches ÷ by 57.3. gives lbs. consequently 8+8+8÷573=893lb. of powder.

☞ Similar answers have been received from R. Maffett, of Plymouth; William Courtis, of Upton Pyne; G. Spry, of Egg Buckland; J. Saunders, of Exeter; and P. Ninnis, of Tavistock.

Answer, by H. B. of Bridgewater, to J. Melhuish's Enigma, inserted the 24th of October.

HOPE's patient, lovely, gentle, and benign,
Gracious to man, an attribute divine!
A chearful welcome, and a constant guest,
Within the true believer's pious breast.

† Similar answers have been received from S. Duck, P. G. and Frederic Arden, of South Petherton; W. D. Champion, of Bridgewater; J. W. of Charmouth; R. Loosemore, of Tiverton; G. Spry, of Egg Buckland; J. Ball, J. French, and J. Patten, at Evershot school; J. Fry, of Curry Rivell; W. Kent, near Camelford; J. Miller, of Exmouth; J. Saunders, and J. Treadwin, of Exeter; Philo-Musæus, of Yeovil; J. Blake; C. Crews, of Newton Abbot; Radius, of Noss Revelstoke school; T. Pearse, Chard; and R. Gidley, Jun. of Dean Prior.

Answer, by J. Saunders, of Exeter, to T. K.'s Rebus, inserted October 24.

LO soft COMPASSION! never fails to show
A lively, deep concern for others' woe;
Distress, in many a varied form, relieves,
And to the mourner heavenly comfort gives.

†† A similar answer has been received from H. B. and W. D. Champion, of Bridgewater; J. Colley, of St. German's; Philo Musæus, Yeovil; J. Woodman, North Curry; J. Treadwin, Exeter; J. Miller, Exmouth; T. K. of Chard; R. Gidley, jun. of Dean Prior; J. W. of Charmouth; W. Kent, Camelford; R. Loosemore, Tivetton; H. Easter, Poole; Radius, of Noss Revelstoke school; R. Withall, Plymouth; C. Crews, of Newton Abbot; F. Arden, S. Duck, and P. G. of South Petherton; and J. Ball, J. French, and J. Patten, at Evershot school.

An ANAGRAM, *by a Youth.*

AN ancient king aright transpose,
An ancient island 'twill disclose.

A CHARADE, *by C. Crews, of Newton Abbot.*

A Bird well-known must first be found;
Part of the same you'll next expound:
My whole is what I've often made,
Its name you'll find in this charade.

A CHARADE, *by Henry Ellis, of Exeter.*

VIEW the lone captive on the clay-cold ground,
Out-stretch'd on straw, with vermin swarming round;
Bound fast in fetters, and whose rattling chains,
Declare his mis'ry, and renew his pains;
No ray of light his dungeon can illume,
Nor can my first e'er dissipate the gloom;
My next the gamester (skill'd in ev'ry wile
And cunning art th' unwary to beguile)
With pleasure sees, in hopes to gain the spoils,
The earnest object of his anxious toils:
Oft by my whole our sorrow are repress'd—
A lenient balm to soothe the troubled breast.

POETRY.

ODE ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

YE nymphs of Salem, who, with hallow'd lays,
The fame of royal victors love to praise;
Oh! now with sweeter, softer music sing,
A tender, peaceful, infant king.

Let all your tuneful timbrels sound,
His praise in harmony be told;
With hymns approach his cradle round,
Which eastern monarchs deck'd with gold.

The mighty wonders are reveal'd,
Which bards in visionary scenes beheld,
An unknown star leads on th' auspicious morn,
A virgin has conceiv'd! a God is born!

The conscious earth,
Sees with smiles the glorious birth;
And, teeming at the sight, profusely spreads
Her fragrant offspring o'er the dewy meads.
Fresh rising greens the sandy desart fill,
And, like the valley, blooms the barren hill!
He comes! Not so of old he came,
Wrapp'd in terror, cloath'd in flame;
When with the Almighty burden press'd,
All Sinai trembled, and the God confess'd!
Kind and bounteous he appears,
Exciting love, dispelling fears.
Pitying, gentle, mild,

And, lest he should too awful be,
Cloth'd in parental majesty,
Puts on the tender image of a child.

An humble title condescends to own,
And David's lord resigns for David's son.
Now let th' afflicted bosom be at rest,
No tear be seen, but ev'ry sigh suppress'd;
The voice of wailing shall be heard no more,
Wretches shall smile who never smil'd before;
Let those whom stormy fates have never toss'd,
Untouch'd by grief, by no misfortune cross'd,
In new delight the blissful hours employ,
Augment their mirth, exult with double joy;
While every tongue, enraptur'd, hails the morn
On which the Saviour of the World was born!

CHRISTIANUS.

RECOLLECTION OF CHRISTMAS.

[From Mr. Scott's Poem, entitled Marmion; a Tale of Flodden Field.]

AND well our Christian sires of old
Lov'd, when the year its course had roll'd
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all his hospitable train.

Domestic

Domestic and religious rite
Gave honour to the holy night:
On Christmas eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas eve the mass was sung;
That only night, in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
The damsel donn'd her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dress'd with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry men go,
To gather in the misletoe.
Then open'd wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And ceremony doff'd his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner chuse;
The lord, underogating, share
The vulgar game of "post and pair."
All hailed with uncontrouled delight,
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

The fire, with well-dried logs supply'd,
Went, roaring, up the chimney wide;
The huge hall table's oaken face,
Scrubb'd 'till it shone, the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
By old blue-coated serving man;
Then the grim boar's-head frown'd on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garb'd ranger tell,
How, when, and where, the monster fell;
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar;
While round the merry wassel bowl,
Garnish'd with ribbons, blithe *did* trowl.
There the huge sirloin reek'd; hard by
Plumb-porridge stood, and Christmas pie;
Nor fail'd old Scotland to produce,
At such high tide, her savoury goose.
Then came the merry masquers in,
And carols roar'd with blithsome din;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note, and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming see
Traces of ancient mystery;
White shirts supply'd the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visor made;
But, Oh! what masquers richly dight
Can boast of bosoms half so light!
England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broach'd the mightiest ale;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft would cheer
The poor man's heart thro' half the year.

END OF THE FORTY-EIGHTH VOLUME.

James Langdon, Printer, Sherborne.

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